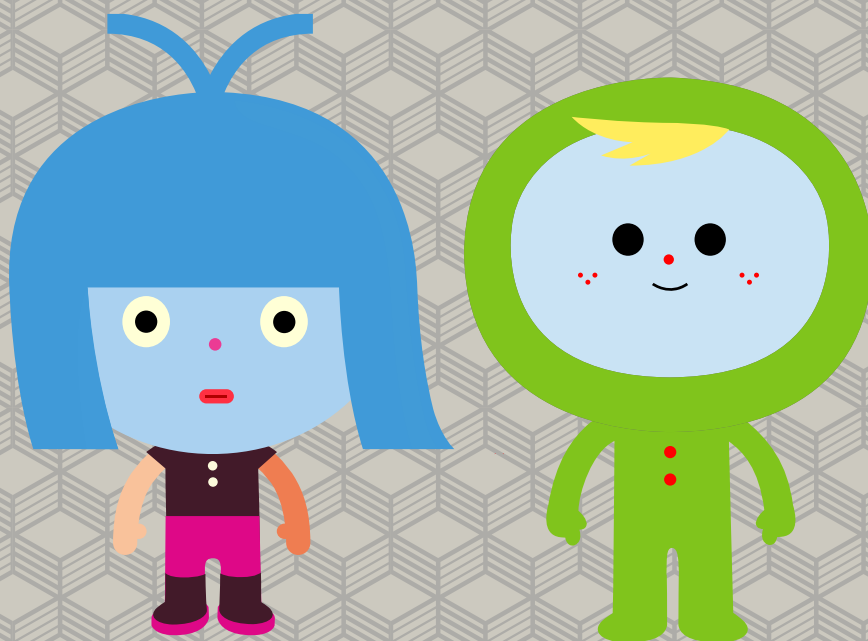


# PROMOTING YOUR STAFF WELLBEING

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOOLS







# Self-Confidence

Consider whether all classroom environments and communal areas are safe and happy places for children and adults.

Give time for people to declutter during the year, and move classroom at the end of the year, if they need it.

Spot anyone who is tidying their classroom at the end of the day and support them to train the children to do a better job of tidying up after themselves. Perhaps ask the cleaners to grade each classroom over the course of a week and recognise the tidiest class in celebration assembly.

Hold a competition whereby teams are given a small amount of money to makeover an area of the school that needs it – often the toilets, or the space where the photocopier lives.

Set up systems for reward and recognition, e.g. post cards of thanks for sharing good practice.

Ask, how do we collectively promote child and adult wellbeing? What more can we do?

Move away from data driven appraisal targets. Support staff to achieve their targets.

Create an exciting offer of Continuous Professional Development opportunities. Ensure that staff understand that attending a course off-site for the day isn't the only form of CPD and that there are lots of other ways in which they can develop.

Review your pay policy to move away from data driven performance related pay.

Put systems in place that allow your staff to do their job confidently and successfully, e.g. reduce monitoring activities and consider how helpful lesson observations and learning walks are.

Provide opportunities for people to work alongside and observe colleagues.

Provide opportunities for people to collaborate with peers, e.g. introduce action learning sets or teaching and learning communities.

Create a listening, open door culture with the Senior Leadership Team.



# Achievement and Success

Remove the concept of striving for 'perfection.' Model being 'good enough'.

Share Sentis' Neuroplasticity YouTube clip with staff - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELpfYCa87g>.

Give time and opportunities to reflect and build on things that have gone well.

Resist the temptation to introduce every new initiative – be selective and only adopt ways of working that are helpful to your context and situation.

Rather than feeding back on the unchangeable past, feed forward.

Make meaningful comments that encourage a growth mindset and further development. Focus on the effort and process, not just the person or the outcome, e.g. 'Great job on that survey – you must have worked really hard? If you did it again, what would you do differently?'

Remember to give regular, quiet words of praise.

Provide opportunities for staff to jump into 'The Learning Pit' and be in their stretch zone. Support them through the process, if appropriate.

Encourage a whole school, we're-in-this-together ethos. After all, a lot of people will have taught the Year 6 cohort throughout their time at the school – the Key Stage 2 results aren't just the responsibility of one or two teachers.

Create an ethos of continuous improvement, whilst recognising that people struggle with change. If you are thinking about bringing in any wholesale changes, think about the best way to do this, so that you take your team with you. Perhaps trialling new ideas with a small group first might help?



# Support

Make sure that the things you say will happen, do.

Create a Wellbeing Champion or Team. Perhaps they could have a different focus each half term?

Arrange social events that everyone can attend, if they'd like to. Remember, not everyone can make it to the pub on a Friday evening, or afford an expensive Christmas do.

Create a culture where people can ask for help and offload. Within this, train staff to coach each other to be able to problem solve and be more solution focused.

Make sure that breaks are encouraged – either in the staffroom or getting outside for a walk. If you notice someone isn't getting out of their classroom, take them a cuppa and check they're okay.

Create a Wellbeing Buddy system and encourage random acts of kindness.

Provide Mental Health Awareness training for all your staff and create Mental Health First Aider roles – to support both children and adults.

Continue to work in partnership with parents, to help them better understand how they can support their children and the staff.

Encourage people who are leaving to attend an exit interview. Ask them how you can better support people going forward. Even if you don't agree with their comments or suggestions, give them some thought.

Ask staff what they need to help them better cope, e.g. flexible working hours, time off for own and family members' medical appointments, time off to attend own children's events, e.g. class assemblies, sports days.

Be aware that some generic, authority-wide policies may be detrimental to people's mental health, in particular policies that deal with staff absence and bereavement. Allow leaders some wriggle room by adding 'at the school's/ headteacher's discretion'.



# Positive Relationships

Review your values, ensuring that they promote the things you hold dear, e.g. trust, respect, empathy

Although there are bound to be closer friendships within your staff team, and some other folks who rub along, make sure that people are speaking to each other professionally at all times.

Be acutely aware of any bullying behaviours amongst the staff team and address these immediately. Ensure that everyone is aware of whistle blowing procedures.

Provide training for all staff to help them to better understand themselves and others, e.g. active listening, social and emotional intelligence, unconscious bias.

Conduct a staff wellbeing survey – with options to add comments and suggestions.

Support staff to successfully manage any challenging pupil behaviours. If things get difficult, be there to lend a hand, whilst making sure that everyone has the knowledge, skills and understanding needed.

Enable staff to form positive relationships with their new class and, in particular, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Make time for them to: observe the children in their current class, produce resources, chat through ideas with the school's Educational Psychologist.

Support staff to build positive relationships with parents, e.g. asking a mentor to sit with a Newly Qualified Teacher during their first round of parent-teacher consultations, role playing a potentially tricky conversation.

Support staff, if they have had particularly challenging or aggressive encounters with parents. This might be through your actions towards the parent, but could also be in terms of providing an offload or supervision session, if appropriate.



# Coping

Put systems in place which support staff wellbeing, e.g. no emailing before 8am, after 6pm or on weekends; WhatsApp groups to be used to have professional, positive chats.

Make sure that time is protected, e.g. staff to keep PPA, stick to meeting times, don't have unnecessary meetings.

Train leaders and wellbeing champions to recognise signs of people feeling overwhelmed, particularly at the end of term, at report writing time, during parent-consultations.

Reinforce that people should be looking after their mental health and happiness now, not when they've completed their to-do list or finished a particular project.

Use and model the gas mask theory – make sure that people are looking after themselves as then they will be better able to support others, both at work and at home.

Talk to people about the importance of quick wins, if they're feeling overwhelmed. By completing small tasks (not necessarily school related) we gain a sense of control and a boost of dopamine.

Encourage people to create good new habits, e.g. getting out of the classroom early one evening a week and going to the staff exercise club/ the gym, instead of marking.

Be aware of your own behaviours when the pressure is on and think before you speak, e.g. if you've had a challenging conversation with a parent, consider which aspects are and aren't helpful to share with others; if Ofsted are due, remember that it's unlikely to help anyone to hear the 'O' word on a daily basis.

Review your policies, to see if they aid or hinder staff wellbeing. Ask yourself, can children still be supported to make great progress without teachers having to do as much marking?

Review your practices: 'Will running Easter SATs sessions give everybody the physical, mental and emotional break that they need to be firing on all cylinders in the summer term?'

Engage parental support through some of your reviews, e.g. What would they like to be included in end of year reports? Which bits are a waste of time?

Ensure that the Senior Leadership Team model self-care strategies.

Encourage others to look after their own wellbeing but remember that one size doesn't fit all, e.g. some people will benefit from clocking off at 4pm on a Friday to start their weekend, others will rather stay until 6pm, so that they are prepared for the following week.

Help people to keep things in perspective, and not to catastrophise. Apart from the most serious situations, we can usually have a laugh about things after a while.

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